“How to Live as Suffering Saints”

1 Peter 2:21-25

Peter is writing Christian slaves who needed to know what kind of conduct God expected of them in the midst of unjust treatment

As we noted last time, the theme of submission underscores much of what he was communicating throughout this letter

The fact they were to patiently and willingly submit to an abusive master was indeed tremendously challenging

So Peter points them to Christ and how He responded when He was treated unjustly

Their primary motivation in responding properly was to be rooted in mirroring Christ’s actions when He suffered unfairly

Furthermore, Peter makes it clear they were called to pattern Jesus’ humble example, beginning with verse 21

To be “called” is to be intentionally invited to participate in something

An example would be a verbal request that’s given to join a team

Whatever experiences the team will go through you are fully expected to enter into them

2

As believers, we are called not only to salvation itself but also to what’s inherently part of living like a Christian

We’re called out of darkness (1 Peter 2:9)

We’re called to liberty (Galatians 5:13)

We’re called to live a worthy life (Ephesians 4:1)

We’re called in one hope (Ephesians 4:4)

We’re called to live without anxiety (Colossians 3:15)

We’re called to holiness (1 Peter 1:15)

We’re called to eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10)

We’re also called to suffer patiently (1 Peter 2:24)

We’re to enter fully and willingly into this

There’s no exemption here

Christ inescapably suffered injustice for every one of us, so we should not expect freedom from suffering as we live for Him

His suffering was therefore exemplary as well as efficacious (having the power to produce a desired effect)

Those who promote the health, happiness, prosperity gospel give this little to no visibility or emphasis in their teaching

There is no true expression of Christianity without some form of suffering inherent within it (2 Timothy 3:12)

3

“Leaving” means “to bequeath”

It’s an inheritance every single believer receives from Christ

This inheritance consists of an example which we are to mirror in our lives

“Example” = “A writing copy, including all the letters of the alphabet, given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them.”

Christ’s life is literally like a copy for imitation which we are to exactly follow

Peter refers to it as following His steps

To do so is actually a verification of authentic faith

1 John 2:6: “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

We cannot replicate Christ’s sinlessness, but we can mirror His righteous responses

Verse 22 has a connection to Isaiah 55:9 where the prophet states there will be no evident deceit in the Messiah’s mouth

The fact Christ was sinless throughout His life goes beyond remarkable

He alone was the only person to live an impeccable life

4

This is truly an astonishing fact

How easily do we fall into the snare of temptation?

How often do we sin in the course of a day?

In the course of a normal life span, we unquestionably sin millions upon millions of times

This is what makes Christ’s unjust treatment all the more unconscionable

He never spoke a lie or ever intentionally tried to deceive anyone for selfish purposes

He never practiced retaliation when He had every opportunity to do so

No one in human history received more unjust persecution than Him

Yet, He patiently sought no retribution

Peter instructs these Christian slaves to act the very same way

We’re also to follow Christ’s steps by living according to this same pattern

This is, without question, a tremendous challenge

How can we possibly accomplish this?

Through Christ who presently lives within us

5

Let’s remind ourselves of the unjust suffering Christ endured

He was mercilessly mocked, spit upon, slapped across the face, punched, falsely accused, scourged, pierced spitefully with a crown of thorns, blasphemed, crucified upon a cross

Peter specifically references how he was reviled

“To ‘revile’ is to pile up abusive and vile language against someone. Though verbally abused, Christ never retaliated with vicious words and threats.” (The MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1943)

This revilement was something He endured throughout His earthly ministry but much more intensely so before and during His horrendous crucifixion

Yet in all of His unjust suffering, He did not resort to vengeful threatening

Remember, His divine power was limitless

Furthermore, He had 12 legions (over 70,000) of angels at His ready disposal should He call upon them

Instead, Christ suffered the most gruesome, unjust abuse with patient silence, thus fulfilling this prophecy from Isaiah 53:7

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he opened not His mouth.”

6

Rather, He practiced submission to His Heavenly Father’s will, believing in the inevitable certainty of God’s certain ultimate, righteous and final judgment

He even went further than just patiently enduring the unjust physical suffering

He bore our sins in His own body upon the cross when He did not deserve to take the punishment for any one of them

This was far more excruciating suffering than just the physical pain because the wrath of God the Father was unleashed upon Him, even to the point of forsaking Him

Nothing any one of us goes through with regard to unjust suffering can begin to compare with Christ

Based upon what He accomplished for us, we have now made a resolute commitment to live righteously for Him

We can do this because His wounds have made spiritual healing a reality

This would have especially resonated with the Christian slaves who were beaten unjustly

When He died for our sins, we died with Him and when He rose up victoriously from the grave, we rose with Him

So, through His atoning sacrifice and subsequent resurrection, we can, through His divine power, victoriously overcome sinful responses to unjust suffering (Romans 8:37)

7

Now every believer has total security through their saving relationship with Christ

Verse 25 goes back to Isaiah 53:6

Before we came to salvation through faith in Christ, we were wandering astray, on a pathway leading to eternal punishment

Now we have come into God’s eternal sheepfold

Nothing can ultimately harm us there

Christ is the great Shepherd and faithful Guardian for each person who is in the family of God

We’re in a place of eternal safety no matter what people may do to us right now

Let’s give God praise and thanks for these unchangeable promises and eternal blessings